SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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UT SOUTHWESTERN DIABETES RESEARCHER RECEIVES GRANT

DALLAS — September 8, 1995 — An internationally recognized team of diabetes researchers at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas will receive more than $3.3 million, one of five national grants from the International Juvenile Diabetes Association.

Dr. J. Denis McGarry, professor of internal medicine and biochemistry at UT Southwestern, and his colleagues will use the grant to advance their study of the role of fat metabolism in the development of diabetes. He is particularly interested in investigating the complex interactions between sugar and fat metabolism, in the hope of determining what causes a diabetic reaction.

"The award from the International Juvenile Diabetes Association is extremely important to UT Southwestern," said McGarry. "First, it represents a major source of overall funding for diabetes research activities. Second, it will ensure the continuing close collaboration among a number of campus laboratories with diverse interests and scientific expertise in areas of common interest — gaining a better understanding of the causes of type I and type II diabetes and seeking new approaches to the prevention and/or possible cure of these two devastating diseases.

"It is especially gratifying that the organization extended this support with its hard-earned dollars. In this age of increasing tightness of federal funds for biomedical research we are extremely grateful for this expression of confidence in our researchers."

McGarry is considered a world leader in the investigation of control of fatty-acid oxidation, not only in the liver but also in other tissues, said Dr. Roger Unger, director of UT Southwestern's Gifford Laboratories for Diabetes Research at UT Southwestern, where McGarry is a member of the research team. Unger also holds the Touchstone/West

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Distinguished Chair in Diabetes Research.

McGarry received international attention for suggesting that type II diabetes may be triggered by too much insulin rather than too little. He hypothesized that excessive insulin produced by the pancreas in the early stages of the disease leads to abnormal fat metabolism, which, in turn, interferes with the muscles' ability to use glucose. This might lead to failure of pancreatic beta cells, which manufacture and release insulin.

Definitive answers to these and other diabetes questions under investigation in laboratories at UT Southwestern could very well fill in important pieces of the diabetes puzzle, said Dr. Daniel Foster, chairman of internal medicine, himself a world-renowned diabetes researcher. McGarry has collaborated with Foster on much of his early diabetes research, which was done in Foster's lab. Foster holds the Donald W. Seldin Distinguished Chair in Internal Medicine.

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